UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/AC.51/1997/L.4/Add.36
17 June 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-seventh session
9 June-3 July 1997
Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION (item 4 (b))

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs

1. At its 2nd to 4th meetings, from 9 to 11 June 1997, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs transmitted to it under cover of a note by the Secretary-General stating his concurrence with the recommendations contained in the report (E/AC.51/1997/3).

Discussion

2. Many delegations commented on the timeliness of the report since most of the issues analysed in it would be reviewed at the upcoming 1997 session of the Economic and Social Council under its agenda item entitled "Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance". Several delegations considered that the report and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on it would provide useful inputs to the work of the Council and any reform of the United Nations. One delegation stated that, since the recommendations in the report were endorsed by the Secretary-General, it was expected that they would be utilized in any reform in the field. Several delegations stated that the Committee should bear in mind that the Secretary-General would make reform proposals in the near future.

97-16376 (E) 180697 190697

/...

3. With regard to the section on relief and rehabilitation, one delegation expressed the view that humanitarian relief operations should not be wound up or scaled down prematurely as that had negative implications for the rehabilitation process that followed and that exit strategies for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be comprehensive, neutral and objective and should not be dictated by political considerations.

4. Delegates generally found the recommendations presented in the report sound and thoughtful. In the course of the debate, delegations made observations on the following recommendations:

(a) Recommendation 1. Several delegations stressed that administrative rules and regulations adapted to emergency activities should be adopted without delay;

(b) Recommendations 2 to 5. Several delegations considered that there should be more active support to natural disaster reduction as highlighted in that set of recommendations; one delegation stated that natural disaster reduction would be more effective in the context of a development programme, such as UNDP;

(c) Recommendation 6. Many delegations stressed the importance of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and strongly endorsed the recommended enhancement of the support of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to the work of the Standing Committee;

(d) Recommendations 7 and 8. Several delegations stressed the importance of achieving effective field coordination while minimizing the cost and complexity of coordination arrangements. One delegation noted that coordination arrangements and the tasks carried out were agreed upon in consultation with the host country and some delegations stressed the need for coordination, with the operations being undertaken by the national Government. One delegation considered there was a need to explore possible ways and means to enhance the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in order to bridge peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance activities;

(e) Recommendation 13. One delegation stressed that effective monitoring would increase accountability and a more coherent approach to emergency humanitarian assistance;

(f) Recommendation 14. Several delegations raised questions on the proposed briefings of the President of the Security Council by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and stressed that such briefings should be for the full membership of the Organization. Several delegations supported the recommendations as contained in the report while several others objected to that recommendation;

(g) Recommendations 16 and 17. One delegation expressed its view that an effective early-warning system would enhance the capability of the United Nations in implementing preventive measures and increasing the success of such measures.

5. Several delegations stressed that the share of regular budget resources allocated to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be increased to minimize the effects of the Department's reliance on extrabudgetary funding.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee expressed appreciation for the quality and comprehensive nature of the report.

7. The Committee considered that the activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should remain within its mandate, which was primarily a coordinating role. In that respect, the Committee was in agreement with the main thrust of the report, which was (a) to strengthen the capacity of the Department to support effectively inter-agency cooperation and coordination, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Emergency Relief Coordinator; and (b) to ensure that the Department did not become involved in operational activities, which were more effectively carried out by the operational programmes and agencies that were represented in the Standing Committee.

8. Subject to the different views expressed by delegations during the discussion, and subject to subsequent decisions of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly on the coordination of humanitarian assistance at their upcoming sessions, the Committee endorsed recommendations 1 to 13 and 14 (b) to 22 as contained in the report.

9. The Committee considered that the in-depth evaluation report and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on it should be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its forthcoming session under the item entitled "Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance".